

Above all, define Guam's political status

By **Manuel L. Jose**

Is it time for Guam to write its own constitution? NO! To do so would be "putting the cart ahead of the horse" — tantamount to answering a question before it is even asked.

The proper time would be after Congress has granted us a political status, something similar to commonwealth status given to the Philippines in 1935. That authorized the Filipinos to write and adopt their own constitution that defined their sovereignty and with procedures for governance. It provided for independence after a 10-year transition period which was fulfilled in July 4, 1945.

▲ "What are the pros and cons of Guam hav-

ing its own constitution?" If a constitution is adopted in the absence of any defined grant of political status, it would be of no use to Guam. Hence, its pros and cons would be indeterminable.

▲ "Would a constitution enhance self government?" It certainly will enhance self-government if the constitution so adopted will serve to govern the political status granted by Congress in either statehood, independence or free association, in which case, the status must first be defined and granted before the constitution is written and adopted.

▲ "Would adopting a constitution affect Guam's quest for self-determination?" To GovGuam and the Chamorros, "self-determination" means their exclusive right to decide the political status of

Guam as envisioned and proposed in the "Chamorro-only" plebiscite, provided in Guam's P.L. 25-106, P.L. 23-130 and P.L. 23-147; all of which are inconsistent with Section 1421 (b) Subsection (ii) of the Organic Act of Guam. Hence, it is unenforceable and has no force and affect, for no law could be passed nor enforced that would deprive non-Chamorro U.S. citizens of their right to vote.

▲ "Do you agree with Congress having approved authority?" Yes, generally, I agree to prevent abuses by the majority against the minority, particularly on matters involving abridgment of U.S. citizens' right to vote.

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